

# SCAMS OCCUR OFTEN

They are often difficult to recognize until after they have taken place. Because information has become so accessible and readily available on the internet, it has become easy for scammers to target a wide number of people. Scammers have also become very detailed in what they are doing and make the situation seem very legitimate when, in fact, it is not.

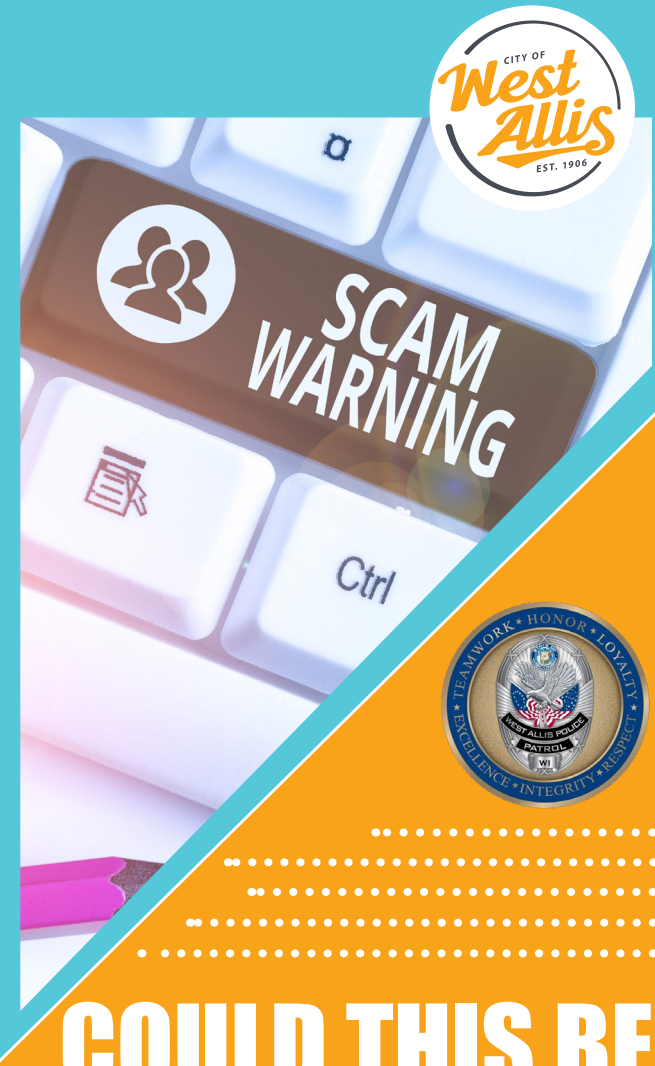
## What can a scam look like?

### Scams can occur:

- In person
- Online
- Over the phone
- Through the mail

## What can I do to prevent being scammed?

- Verify the individual who placed the phone call and what the phone number is
- Look up the true business/agency phone number and contact them directly
- Do not make purchases/payments using gift cards from businesses
- Ask yourself if the situation is “too good to be true”



# COULD THIS BE A SCAM?

Information about common scams, what they may look like and what steps to take if you have become a victim of a scam.



West Allis Police Department  
11301 W. Lincoln Ave.  
West Allis, WI 53227  
414-302-8000  
[www.westalliswi.gov](http://www.westalliswi.gov)

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## HAVE YOU BECOME A VICTIM OF A SCAM OR FRAUD?

Next steps if you have been defrauded of money or had your identity stolen

Contact your bank and have accounts flagged for fraudulent activity

Contact the credit bureau and have your credit flagged for fraudulent activity

Gather all related documents (including letters, emails, text messages, bank statements, and receipts)

Call or walk in to the West Allis Police Department to report the incident

## Commonly Reported Scams

- Individuals claiming to be your grandchildren saying they need emergency money for bail or a lawyer.
- Individuals claiming to be from the Social Security Administration stating your Social Security number has been compromised and you must purchase gift cards to avoid a warrant.
- Entities saying you have been hired for a job requiring you to purchase equipment or electronics and mail it to a location for "programming".
- Individuals claiming to be customer service representatives asking you to purchase gift cards as payment for their assistance.
- Emails or phone calls appearing to be from friends asking you to purchase gift cards as a favor because they are not able to purchase the gift cards themselves for various reasons.

### How do I report identity theft to credit bureau?

Call any of the three credit bureaus and report your incident. That agency will contact the other two bureaus and all three bureaus will place a fraud alert on your file.

- **Experian:** [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com) to add an alert and view your report immediately; 1-888-397-3742
- **Equifax:** 1-800-525-6285; [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)
- **TransUnion:** 1-800-680-7289; [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

## REMEMBER!

A legitimate business will **NEVER** ask you to in pay in gift cards.



## MAKE OTHERS AWARE

Share this information with your friends and family! Fraudulent scams are more common than one would think - it is always beneficial to share as much information as you can with others.

## Commonly Reported Scams

- Individuals claiming to be contractors offering to do work, but requiring money up-front to purchase materials then never completing the work.
- Letters and emails from companies regarding debt consolidation.
- Phone calls or emails from individuals claiming to be from "Apple", stating your accounts or devices have been hacked and gift cards need to be purchased to get rid of hackers.
- Letters or emails stating you have been selected to be a secret shopper.
- Individuals claiming to be AT&T or WE Energies contractors trying to provide you with discounted services.
- Phone calls from parties claiming to be from Publisher's Clearing House, stating you won millions of dollars. However, you need to mail money to them first in order to claim your prize.
- Individuals claiming to be police officers, stating you have a warrant and need to pay via credit card or gift card to clear the warrant or you will be arrested. Always get the officer's name, double check phone numbers by searching for their true agency phone number, and contact the agency with the phone number you looked up for the agency.